

What is claimed is:

1. A remote assistance system comprising
one or more user systems, each user system being operatively connected to a network and having a user processor, one or more user tools running on the user processor, and a user display displaying the results of the user's operation of the one or more user tools to the user of the user system,
one or more remote support systems, each remote support system being operatively connected to the network and having a support processor, a support display, and one or more programs running on the support processor adapted to allow an operator of the support system to view substantially the same information as is being displayed on at least one user display,
means for establishing a communication connection between a user of a user system and an operator of a remote support system such that the user of the user system can submit inquiries to and receive responses from the operator of the remote support system, and
means for establishing a communication connection between the user system and the remote support system such that the support system can obtain user display information over the network while the operator is communicating with the user over the first communication connection.
2. The system of claim 1 wherein the one or more programs running on the support processor allow the operator of the support system to control the user system such that the operator can cause the results displayed on the user display to be modified.
3. The system of claim 1 further comprising
means for requesting remote support for a user of a user system, and
a server system operatively connected to the network, the server system having means, responsive to the request for remote support, for selecting an available one of the one or more remote support systems to provide remote support to the user and for supplying the request for support to the selected one of the one or more remote support systems.

4. The system of claim 3 wherein the server system further comprises a queue for holding requests for remote support if a support system is not available.
5. The system of claim 1 wherein the communication connection between the user of a user system and the operator of a remote support system is an audio connection.
6. The system of claim 5 wherein the audio connection is a telephone connection.
7. The system of claim 5 wherein the audio connection is a voice-over-IP connection.
8. The system of claim 1 wherein the communication connection between the user of a user system and the operator of a remote support system is a video connection
9. The system of claim 1 wherein the communication connection between the user of a user system and the operator of a remote support system is a text messaging connection.
10. A networked user system comprising
a processor,
one or more user tools running on the processor,
a user display displaying the results of the user system user's operation of the one or more user tools,
means for providing information to a remote support system to allow the remote support system to display substantially the same results as are being displayed on the user display, and
means for allowing the user of the user system to submit inquiries to and receive responses from the operator of the remote support system while the operator is viewing the display information.
11. The system of claim 10 further comprising

means for allowing the operator of the remote support system to cause the results displayed on the user display to be modified.

12. The system of claims 1 or 10 wherein the one or more user tools include at least one design tool for allowing a user of the user system to edit an electronic document.

13. The system of claims 1 or 10 wherein the one or more user tools execute in a browser program running on the processor.

14. A networked support system comprising
at least one processor,
at least one support display operatively connected to the at least one processor,
means for receiving inquiries from and submitting responses to a user of a remote user system having a user display,
means for obtaining display information from the remote user system, and
means for displaying substantially the same display information on the support display as is being displayed to the user on the user display while the operator of the support system is receiving inquiries from and submitting responses to the user.

15. The system of claim 14 further comprising means running on the processor for causing the information displayed on the user display to be modified.

16. The system of claims 10 or 14 wherein inquiries are submitted and responses are received by audio.

17. The system of claims 10 or 14 wherein inquiries are submitted and responses are received by text.

18. The systems of claims 10 or 14 wherein inquiries are submitted and responses are received by video.

19. A method of providing assistance from an operator of a support system having a support display to a user on a remote user system having a user display, the method comprising
- receiving a request for remote assistance from the user system, and
 - in response to the request,
 - establishing a communication connection between the user of the user system and the operator of the support system
 - establishing a communication connection between the user system and the support system, and
 - displaying substantially the same the information on the support display as is being displayed on the user display while the user and the operator communicate over the communication connection between the user and the operator.
20. A method of providing assistance from an operator of a support system having a support display to a user on a remote user system having a user display, the method comprising
- establishing one or more alert conditions,
 - monitoring the remote user system for the occurrence of one or more of the alert conditions,
 - in response to detection of one or more of the alert conditions,
 - establishing a communication connection between the user of the user system and the operator of the support system
 - establishing a communication connection between the user system and the support system, and
 - displaying substantially the same the information on the support display as is being displayed on the user display while the user and the operator communicate over the communication connection between the user and the operator.
21. A method of providing assistance from an operator of a support system having a support display to a user on a remote user system having a user display, the method comprising

establishing one or more alert conditions,
monitoring the remote user system for the occurrence of one or more of the alert conditions,
in response to detection of one or more of the alert conditions, generating a message to the user of the user system inquiring if the user would like assistance from the support system,
if the user indicates that the user would like assistance,
establishing a communication connection between the user of the user system and the operator of the support system
establishing a communication connection between the user system and the support system, and
displaying substantially the same the information on the support display as is being displayed on the user display while the user and the operator communicate over the communication connection between the user and the operator.

22. The method of claims 19, 20 or 21 further comprising
the operator causing the information displayed on the user display to be modified.
23. The method of claims 19, 20 or 21 wherein the communication connection between the user of a user system and the operator of a remote support system is an audio connection.
24. The method of claims 19, 20 or 21 wherein the audio connection is a telephone connection.
25. The method of claims 19, 20, or 21 wherein the audio connection is a voice-over-IP connection.
26. The method of claims 19, 20 or 21 wherein the communication connection between the user of a user system and the operator of a remote support system is a video connection

27. The method of claims 19, 20 or 21 wherein the communication connection between the user of a user system and the operator of a remote support system is a text messaging connection.